

Welcome to the neighbourhood!

THE BEACHES

Urban pleasures, natural beauty

Welcome
MAP ONE



Legend

- Beach Front
- Boardwalk
- Bus, Streetcar Route
- Greenspace
- Paved Pathway
- Municipal Parking
- One-way Street
- Architectural/Historical Interest
- Recreation & Leisure
- 1 Corpus Christi Catholic Church
- 2 Woodbine Park
- 3 Ashbridge's Bay Park
- 4 Woodbine Beach
- 5 Beaches Park/Balmy Beach Park
- 6 No. 17 Firehall
- 7 Beach Hebrew Institute
- 8 Waverley Road Baptist Church
- 9 Bellefair United Church
- 10 Kew Gardens
- 11 The Beaches Library
- 12 Kew Williams Cottage

TORONTO Tourism

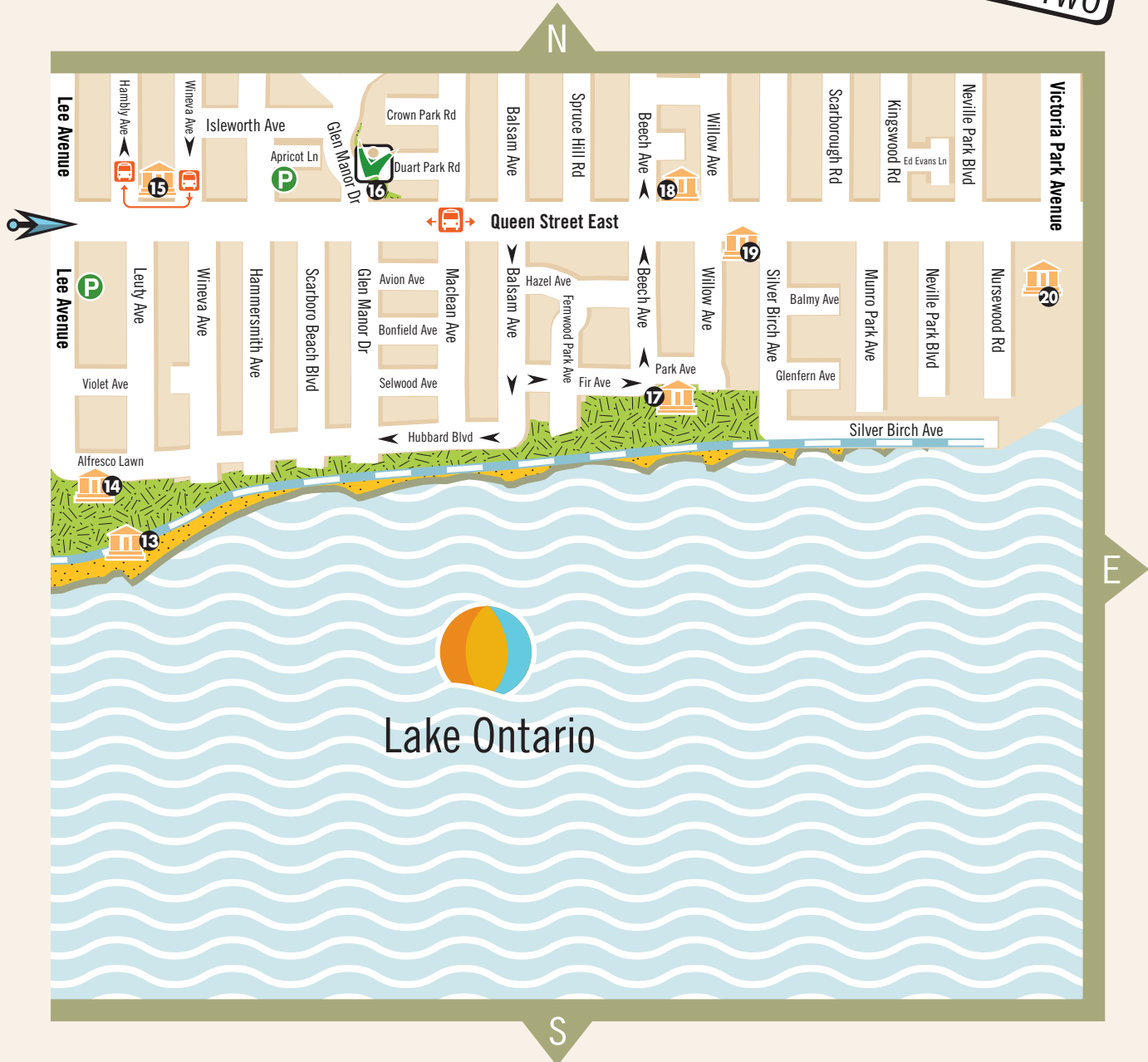


Welcome to the neighbourhood!

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MAP TWO



Legend

- Beach Front
- Boardwalk
- Bus, Streetcar Route
- Greenspace
- Municipal Parking
- One-way Street
- Architectural/Historical Interest
- Recreation & Leisure
- 13 Leuty Lifesaving Station
- 14 Kew Beach Park Boathouse
- 15 Kew Beach United Church
- 16 The Glen Stewart Ravine
- 17 Balmy Beach Club
- 18 The Fox Cinema
- 19 Church of St. Aidan
- 20 R.C. Harris Filtration Plant

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How to get there

By TTC: Take the 501 streetcar west from the Queen Street subway station to any stop between Coxwell and Neville Park.

By Car: Depending on the time of year as well as the time of day, parking can be tricky. There's street parking (with ticket purchase) except for certain hours, and there are several small "Green P" parking lots dotted along Queen St. E., such as:

- Lee Ave. south of Queen E.;
- Hammersmith Ave. north of Queen;
- three small parking lots 1/2 block south of Queen just west of Woodbine;
- Eastern Ave. between Coxwell and Queen.



There are also two fairly large parking lots south of Lakeshore Blvd. E.; both of these provide easy access to the parkland by the lake. In the summer, however, you'll need to get there early to find a spot.

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Points of interest

1 Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

Built in 1926, this church possesses a very large indoor mural painted by noted Canadian painter (and onetime Beaches resident) William Kurelek (1927-1977).

2 Woodbine Park.

The Woodbine Racetrack operated at this location from 1874 to 1993, and the prestigious Queen's Plate was run there from 1883 to 1955. Over the years, the Park has hosted a great variety of events—including "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show" in 1885. The racetrack was renamed "Greenwood Raceway" when Woodbine opened in its current location in Toronto's northwestern suburbs in 1956, and the old track closed in 1993; the area was subsequently redeveloped as residential housing and parkland.

3 Ashbridge's Bay Park.

This park is named after Sarah Ashbridge, a United Empire Loyalist originally from Philadelphia, who settled here in 1793. A Quaker widow with two sons, she obtained a Crown land grant for a farm in 1799; the family lived there until the last son died in 1861. The waterfront park you see today officially opened in 1977.

4 Woodbine Beach.

In 2005, Woodbine Beach became one of the first beaches in North America to be recognized by the

"Blue Flag" program: an international award for maintaining high standards for water quality, safety, beach maintenance, and environmental education and outreach.

5 Beaches Park/Balmy Beach Park.

The City began acquiring privately-owned land and water lots in 1921, demolishing more than 200 houses and a number of private bathhouses to make way for Beaches Park, which opened in 1932. Balmy Beach Park was created in 1903, and has enjoyed a close relationship with the Balmy Beach Club (see [Point 17](#)) since the very beginning.

6 No. 17 Firehall.

After the Great Toronto Fire destroyed much of the downtown core in 1904, the Toronto Fire Department began to evolve from groups of volunteers into today's professional organization. No. 17 was built in 1905, taking over from the volunteer fire brigade that had been operating at Queen and Lee since 1891.

7 Beach Hebrew Institute.

Commonly known as "The Beaches Shul", the Institute purchased a small brick-and-timber structure (built in 1895) from Kenilworth Baptist Church in 1920 (see [Point 8 for the early history of this building](#)). Several years after the purchase, the façade was rebuilt in the traditional "Shtibel" style, adding the arched entrance, windows, and parapet.

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See Map 1 for points 1-12. See Map 2 for points 13-20

TORONTO Tourism

Why you should go

The Beaches offers all the best features of a small resort town just 15 minutes from downtown Toronto. With more than 400 unique boutiques, spas, restaurants, cafés, and pubs between Lockwood and Neville Park, you'll find everything from homemade ice cream to fine dining, from antiques to one-of-a-kind gifts, from spa services to homemade pet-treats. But what truly sets The Beaches apart from every other neighbourhood in Toronto is the proximity to the parks along Lake Ontario: with kilometres of sandy beaches, a boardwalk, biking/rollerblading paths, and landscaped gardens, this is a lovely place to visit at any time of year. The Beaches also offers quiet, tree-lined streets with gracious Victorian mansions and charming 19th century beach-houses and cottages. Whether you're looking for a unique gift, a mouthwatering pastry, an energetic workout, or a peaceful stroll along the beach, this area has it all.

What to do

Shopping, dining, and outdoor recreation are the main attractions of this "resort town" inside Toronto. There's so much to see and do in The Beaches that you should expect to spend at least four hours here; if the weather is good, you can easily spend a whole day browsing through boutiques, enjoying a delicious meal, and strolling along the Boardwalk and picturesque sidestreets.

The best way to introduce yourself to this diverse area is to purchase a TTC Day Pass—which offers a single customer or a family/group of customers unlimited travel on all regular TTC services—and ride the streetcar from Coxwell all the way to Victoria Park where it turns around and heads back west. Make a note of establishments or areas that appeal to you, then you can hop on and off the streetcar at will as you head back west. (You can purchase your Day Pass at any subway station or from participating TTC ticket agents. For more information, visit:

www.toronto.ca/ttc/family_pass.htm.)

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More points of interest

- 8 **Waverley Road Baptist Church.** After the congregation outgrew their building on Queen at Kenilworth, they commissioned a new, grander building on nearby Waverley, which opened in 1908. The old building (see Point 7) was used at various times as a warehouse and community centre for more than a decade. As land along Queen St. became more valuable, the building was raised off its foundations on Queen, moved several hundred feet south on Kenilworth, and rotated to face east; the old church then found new life as the Beach Hebrew Institute.
- 9 **Bellefair United Church.** Originally built in 1906 as the "Beach Methodist Church", work on the current Neo-Gothic structure began in 1914. You have to go inside to see the most unusual and lovely feature of this church: three huge stained-glass skylights in the sanctuary.
- 10 **Kew Gardens.** In 1853, Joseph Williams opened Kew Farms in the Queen/Lee area; in 1879, he transformed part of his property into "The Canadian Kew Gardens", which offered "innocent amusements in great variety". The City purchased the grounds in 1907, turning it and adjoining properties into a public park.
- 11 **The Beaches Library.** In 1907, the Carnegie Corporation gave a \$50,000 grant to build three libraries in Toronto. Opened in 1916, the Beaches Branch was modeled after a 17th-century English Collegiate Grammar School with a Tudor-Gothic great hall. This brick-and-stone building received a complete makeover in 2005.
- 12 **Kew Williams Cottage.** Built in 1902 by Kew Williams, the youngest son of landowner Joseph Williams (see Point 10), the stone cottage was sold along with Kew Gardens to the City in 1907. Used by the park superintendent for many decades, the cottage is now used for special events such as art exhibitions.
- 13 **Leuty Lifesaving Station.** One of the most photographed landmarks in The Beaches, Leuty Station has been the scene of more than 6,000 successful rescues. In response to the changing shoreline, the Station has been moved four times since it was built in 1920. In the 1990s, it was a run-down structure facing demolition; local residents refused to let it go without a fight, and formed S.O.S. (Save Our Station), which raised the money to restore this important historic building.
- 14 **Kew Beach Park Boathouse.** Constructed in 1932, this once-pretty structure originally stood right on the water; in 1954, however, Hurricane Hazel smashed into Toronto—and the Boathouse. What Hazel left behind (not much more than the roof and walls at either end) was moved to the north side of the boardwalk.
- 15 **Kew Beach United Church.** This church began life in 1882 as a Methodist Mission; in 1895 it became a Presbyterian church, and in 1905, the building was moved from Queen St. to its present location on Wineva. The structure you see today was built in 1914 to accommodate the growing congregation. In 1925, it became a United church.

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While you're at the eastern end, make a point of walking down to the R.C. Harris Filtration Plant to admire the beautiful Art Deco buildings. From there, you can either head down to the lake and pick up the Boardwalk or walk back up to Queen St.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, this area was a series of privately-owned amusement parks, summer homes, and cottages; all that remains from those days are some of the houses, the street names, and the boardwalk—which has been repaired, restored, and rebuilt many times over the years.

The Boardwalk. Boardwalks have existed in this area since the 1850s. Today, this is a 3.5 kilometre (just over 2 miles) path connecting all the lakeside parks and beaches. It really doesn't matter which end you start at, and if time is short, you don't have to walk the entire distance to get a feel for the area. Take a tip from the locals, who come here for relaxation and pleasurable exercise: walk, bike, or rollerblade along the paths at your own speed. Note: there's a paved trail that runs roughly parallel to the Boardwalk for bikes and rollerblades. Look both ways before you cross the trail to reach the Boardwalk, since wheeled traffic can be moving at quite a clip along here. The City has created an "Eastern Ravine and Beaches Discovery Walk"—a self-guided walk along the Boardwalk and through the parks, ravine, and Beaches neighbourhood. This tour takes about three hours to complete; for more information, click here:

www.toronto.ca/parks/brochures/walks/DW_Eastern.pdf

Woodbine Park. Starting at the west end of The Beaches, Woodbine is the first in a series of linked parks along the waterfront. Home to the Woodbine Racetrack for almost 120 years until its closure in 1993, the park now features wetlands, naturalized meadows, gardens, and an amphitheatre.

Ashbridge's Bay Park. Walking south from Woodbine Park, you'll find Ashbridge's Bay Park: a great place to play beach volleyball or to walk, bike, or rollerblade on the paved paths and wooden boardwalk. There are plenty of scenic lookouts over Lake Ontario; in the summer, you can also take in a Shakespearean play courtesy of www.shakespeareworks.com. The park offers expansive beaches; public boat launch ramps, marina, and moorings; fishing; and a waterfowl habitat.

Woodbine Beach/Beaches Park/Balmy Beach Park. Follow the lakeside boardwalk or cycling trail east along a series of linked waterfront parks—Woodbine Beach, Beaches Park, and

Balmy Beach Park. It will take you about an hour and a half to walk along all the lakeside trails; you can break this up with a picnic lunch, or with a short walk north to Queen St. for shopping or dining.

Kew Gardens. This 20-acre park offers public washrooms, a baseball diamond, an ice rink, lawn bowling, a swimming pool, tennis courts, and beautifully landscaped gardens. At the north-west entrance to Kew Gardens Park, you'll find a memorial to Canadians who gave their lives in World Wars I and II and the Korean War. Stroll over to Lee Ave. and you'll discover Kew Williams Cottage: a pretty little house with a corner tower with a bell-shaped roof and a wrap-around verandah. Just north of the Cottage

More points of interest

- 16 The Glen Stewart Ravine.** In 1872, the Reverend William Stewart Darling bought land south of Kingston Rd. where he built a homestead known as "Glen Stewart". After his death in 1866, the property was sold to Alfred Ames, who made many improvements to the house and grounds. The City acquired the 8.5 hectare park by gift in 1931.
- 17 Balmy Beach Club.** In 1903, Sir Adam Wilson deeded the property at the foot of Beech Ave. to the residents of the Beach; in 1905, the Balmy Beach Club, a non-profit organization for amateur athletes, opened its doors. The original Club House was destroyed by fire in 1936, and the second building burnt down in 1963; on both occasions, members stepped in to rebuild it. The Club House you see today was opened in 1965.
- 18 The Fox Cinema.** Originally known as the Prince Edward Theatre, The Fox is the oldest continuously running

theatre in Toronto. Built in 1914, it is a popular repertory cinema today.

- 19 Church of St. Aidan.** Originally founded as a mission of St. John's, Norway in 1891, the present church officially opened for services in 1910. The beautiful stained-glass windows—some of which are almost a century old—have been added over the years as memorials given by parish families; the most recent window was dedicated in 2002. The floor-to-ceiling wall hanging in the Chapel was designed and executed by long-time parishioner and well-known artist Doris McCarthy.
- 20 R.C. Harris Filtration Plant.** The largest water filtration plant in Canada, R.C. Harris was built in the 1930s on the original site of an amusement park named after Queen Victoria. The Art Deco buildings, with their beautiful green copper roofs and yellow brick walls, are often used in film shoots.

stands the Dr. William D. Young Memorial: an ornate Italian-Renaissance-style fountain with a statue of a child in the centre. Local residents paid for this memorial to be erected after the 'flu epidemic carried off their beloved doctor in 1918 at the age of 44.

The Glen Stewart Ravine. You can access this 8.5 hectare park from the corner of Queen and Glen Manor. It will take you about half an hour to hike up to Kingston Rd. to the north; then follow the trail east then south back down to Queen. You'll encounter some fairly steep hills in the ravine, so make sure you're wearing sensible walking shoes if you're going to hike this trail.

Shopping/Dining. With more than 400 one-of-a-kind boutiques, spas, and eateries to choose from, you're sure to find what you're looking for in The Beaches. Choose any two-block stretch along Queen between Lockwood and Neville Park and you're bound to find at least one antique store, a jeweller, more than one restaurant, a café (either chain or independent), a pub, an ice/cream parlour/bakery/candy store, a health food store/restaurant, a clothing boutique, and a garden/flower shop. You can putter for hours in the establishments along Queen St., and dozens of great restaurants and pubs offer local and exotic delights. The pace is relaxed; you're meant to savour a drink on a patio rather than rush in and out to get a caffeine fix. Step off this lively main street and you'll find some truly remarkable homes—some of which date back to the 19th century.

A short history

The area began as a relatively isolated farming community in the early 1800s. In the 1870s—in part due to Joseph Williams turning part of his extensive property into “The Canadian Kew Gardens” pleasure park—the area began to take on new life as a summer resort for Torontonians.

In 1880, Queen St. was extended west from Woodbine Race Track to Nursewood Rd.; by the end of the decade, the Toronto Street Railway Company (TSR) had extended its line to Lee Ave. The improved street and the streetcar line opened the door to development of a number of amusement parks as well as private cottages and year-round houses. The Toronto Railway Company (TRC) acquired the TSR's franchise in the 1890s, and extended the line east to Munro Park: a 16-acre site amusement park featuring a dance pavilion, a bandstand, and a 150-foot Ferris wheel. The TRC managed this as well as Victoria Park to the east. Munro Park was closed and subdivided for development in 1907; Victoria Park closed after the 1906 summer season. In 1927, the City purchased Victoria Park for use as a water purification plant; the west wing was completed in 1935, and the symmetrical east wing was added in the 1950s. The

plant was named for Beaches resident R. C. Harris—who was also Toronto's Commissioner of Works from 1912 to 1945.

The last amusement park to be built in the area was also the largest and most ambitious of them all. Operated between 1907 and 1925, Scarborough Beach Amusement Park offered a hundred rides and attractions, including freak shows, concerts, games of chance, a restaurant, refreshment stands, and dance and bathing pavilions. Archival photographs show a 1/4 mile long roller coaster and “Shoot the Chutes”: small wooden boats that carried riders down a steep ramp into the lagoon below.

Today, this prime residential area offers easy access to every amenity—from shopping to dining to recreation. Nothing's more than a short stroll away, so park the car and enjoy the relaxed, easy-going ambiance of The Beaches.

● A little trivia ●

- A tradition since 1989, the Beaches International Jazz Festival (BIJF) takes place the last week of July. One of the largest free summer street festivals in Canada, the BIJF attracts 800,000+ jazz, R&B, big band, hip-hop, African, Caribbean, South American, and Latin music fans every year. From concerts in the bandshell to the nightly closure of Queen St. to accommodate the dozens of bands and solo performers, the place is jumpin'! For more information, visit www.beachesjazz.com.
- Three street names recall the bygone era of the pleasure parks: Munro Park, Scarborough Beach, and Victoria Park.
- The Donald D. Summerville Olympic Pool at Lakeshore and Woodbine is named for a former Toronto Mayor and Beaches resident.
- Several feature films have been shot in and around The Beaches, including: “The Tuxedo” (2001) starring Jackie Chan, Jennifer Love Hewitt; “Between Strangers” (2001) starring Sophia Loren and Mira Sorvino; “Undercover Brother” (2001) starring Eddie Griffin, Dave Chappelle, Denise Richards, and Chris Kattan; “Angel Eyes” (2000) starring Jennifer Lopez and James Caviezel; and “Frequency” (1999) starring Dennis Quaid and James Caviezel.
- As real-estate values along Queen St. rose at the beginning of the 20th century, several buildings were literally picked up and moved to a sidestreet north or south of their original location, including the Beach Hebrew Institute on Kenilworth, Kew Beach United Church, and #173 Woodbine—a wildly-painted house that once belonged to William Williamson (1857–1949), a noted Beaches builder, manufacturer, alderman, and Justice of the Peace.